



Complaints Policy

Nurturing today's young people, inspiring tomorrow's exemplary citizens

Date of Last Review	September 2026
Reviewed By	Dr Suhel Ahmed (Safeguarding Governor)
Approved by	Governors & Trust Boards
Review Period	2 Years or as and when required
Version	V1
Date of Next Review	September 2028

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION.....	3
SECTION 2 – GENERAL PRINCIPLES	3
SECTION 3 – AIMS OF THE INSTITUTE	4
SECTION 4 – PURPOSE OF THE POLICY.....	4
SECTION 5 - GUIDELINES	4
SECTION 6 – ANNUAL REVIEW	6
SECTION 7 – PUBLICISING THE PROCEDURE.....	7
APPENDIX 1	8
FORMAL COMPLAINTS FORM.....	8
APPENDIX 2	8
CHECKLIST FOR PANEL HEARING.....	8

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

This procedure has been established in accordance with Section 39 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The procedure sets out arrangements for the Institute in respect of complaints other than:

- Complaints about the curriculum of religious worship.
- Complaints about admissions or exclusions appeal procedures.
- Staff grievance procedures for which separate complaints procedures exist.

SECTION 2 – GENERAL PRINCIPLES

All complaints will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible. The length of the period will vary with the gravity and complexity of the complaint and the urgency with which it needs to be settled. However, the intention is that all complaints should be settled within a period which is reasonable in all the circumstances.

All complaints received, including those ultimately resolved at an informal stage, should be recorded by the Institute's Nominated Complaints Officer. The outcome of the complaint shall also be recorded, together with reasons for that decision, the outcome falling into one of the following categories:

- Complaint resolved informally.
- Complaint dismissed.
- Complaint to be dealt with under another procedure.
- Complaint upheld and the appropriate action is deemed to be one of:
 1. Counselling
 2. Training
 3. General supervision
 4. Other management action

Urgent complaints will be identified as such and given priority.

All complaints will be investigated fully, fairly and carefully and complainants will be kept informed of progress in writing during, as well as at the end of each stage.

A copy of all findings and recommendations and outcomes will be sent by electronic mail, otherwise given to the complainant or the person complained about.

Records of these documents will be filed and be made available for inspection on school premises by the Chair of Governors' and Head Teacher.

The main aim at all stages will be to ensure that either the complaint is settled or that a decision is taken about the complaint, and it can then, if required, proceed to the next stage.

SECTION 3 – AIMS OF THE INSTITUTE

The School's policy is to ensure that the highest possible standards exist. The Schools Standards aims to achieve this by:

- Continually seeking to raise standards of achievement.
- Having high expectations.
- Promoting effective teaching and learning.
- Promoting effective communication between the Institute and with parents and the wider community.

When problems occur or difficulties arise, the Institute will seek to deal promptly, effectively and fairly with any complaints.

SECTION 4 – PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The complaints policy and procedures will allow the Institute to:

- Improve communications by listening to the views of pupils, parents, staff, the local and wider community.
- Strengthen the partnership between pupils, parents, staff and Governing bodies.
- Identify opportunities to improve on standards and to meet Expectations.
- Provide redress where a complaint is found to have substance.

SECTION 5 – GUIDELINES

How a complaint can be made

Complaints may be made in person, by telephone or in writing. A person with a complaint should normally seek to contact the member of staff responsible for the relevant issue. However, all staff will endeavour to seek to help, even when the issue is not that individual's area of responsibility. If unsure, all complaints should be directed to The Principal.

Care will be taken to:

- Clarify the nature of the complaint.
- Clarify the outcomes sought.
- Check whether the person making a complaint requires support of any kind, for example with language difficulties.
- Explain the complaints procedure.

The Institute does not wish to receive anonymous complaints and will not undertake to act on any information received in this way.

Code of Conduct

There is an expectation that all Institute staff dealing with a person making a complaint will act in a courteous and respectful manner. All complaints will be taken as a matter of serious concern. The Institute also expects that the person making the complaint will also conduct themselves in a courteous and respectful manner. At every stage of the complaint's procedure all correspondence, statements and records of complaints must be kept confidential.

Aggressive behaviour towards a member of staff will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Informal Complaint Procedure

An informal complaint is usually an initial approach by an individual to the Institute expressing dissatisfaction. Informal complaints may be resolved quickly and simply and often do not involve detailed or lengthy investigation.

A person with an informal complaint will normally seek to contact the member of staff responsible for the relevant issue via the office of the Head teacher. If the complaint is not resolved at this stage, then the person making the complaint will be referred to the complaints officer by the authority of the Head teacher. It is anticipated that at all stages a written record will be kept and remain confidential to those involved. If these informal discussions do not resolve the situation, then a meeting may be called by the head teacher. This meeting will aim to resolve the issue and involve all parties involved in the complaint. When the complaints cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint should be applied.

Formal Complaint Procedure

Stage One:

A complaint becomes formal when it is put in writing to the senior leadership team via the complaints officer. The complaint form (**See Appendix 1**) attached to this policy can be used or the complainant may write a letter. An acknowledgement will be sent. The head teacher (with support from the Head of Pastoral Care) will investigate the circumstances thoroughly and impartially.

A written response will be issued within 10 Institute days of the complaint being received.

Stage Two:

If the person making the complaint is not satisfied with either the outcome or the progress being made, then an appeal may be made in writing, to the Chair of Governors, who can be contacted via the Institute.

The Chair of Governors' will act impartially to ensure that all parties involved in the complaint have the opportunity to present their case to three people who are independent of the complaint, bringing with them one person from outside the Institute if they feel it is necessary.

The complaints panel hearing will take place within 10 Institute days of the Chair of Governors' being contacted. If the complaint is about the National Curriculum or about RE or the act of collective worship, the Chair of Governors' offers a right of appeal.

The Remit of the Complaints Appeal Panel is that the Panel will:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part.
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- Recommend changes to the Institute's system or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

The panel will be clerked, and the panel will follow the Checklist for a Panel Hearing (**See Appendix 2**). A decision of the panel will be given in writing to the person making the complaint within 10 Institute days of the hearing. It will include findings and any recommendations. The decision will also be received in writing by the Chair of Governors', the Head teacher, the Head of Pastoral Care and where relevant those persons involved.

If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation of harming or posing a risk of harm to children is made about another member of staff including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors.

This should be referred to the Headteacher.

Where there are complaints around safeguarding the school will follow the process in the Safeguarding Policy.

Where there is a concern/allegation about the Headteacher, this should be referred to the Chair of Governors, Chair of Trustees.

If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another member of staff including supply staff, volunteers or contractors.

This should be shared in accordance with the school complaints policy.

SECTION 6 – ANNUAL REVIEW

The Chair of Governors' will monitor and review annually the nature of formal complaints, and the school's response to them, to ensure that the Institute is effectively meeting the expectations of parents and the local community.

In accordance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (Part 7, paragraph 33), the school will keep a written record of all complaints that reach the formal stage, including whether they were resolved following a formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing, and the action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether it was upheld). Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential and retained for a minimum of three years, except where the school is legally required to disclose them. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year will be made available to parents and prospective parents on request. The school aims to conclude the formal complaints procedure, including any panel hearing, within a maximum of 28 school days of the complaint being received, save in exceptional circumstances.

In accordance with National Minimum Standard 14 for boarding schools, boarders are made aware, in a way that is accessible and appropriate to their age, of how to raise a concern or make a complaint, including routes that do not require them to go through school staff. This includes the school's Independent Listener, and external contacts such as Childline (0800 1111) and the NSPCC. Boarders' complaints are recorded and considered separately from day-pupil complaints so that any patterns relating to boarding provision can be identified. A complainant, including a boarder or their parent/carer, may also raise a concern directly with the school's regulatory body (Ofsted or the Independent Schools Inspectorate, as applicable) at any stage, particularly where the concern relates to a child's safety or welfare.

Separately, from June 2026 the Data Protection Act 2018 (section 164A) places a duty on the school, as a data controller, to facilitate complaints from data subjects (for example, a complaint that the school has not handled personal data properly), to acknowledge such complaints within 30 days, investigate them without undue delay, and communicate the outcome promptly. This data protection complaints duty is separate from, and does not replace, the parental complaints procedure at Section 5 above. Where a complaint is purely about data protection, it will usually be handled under the school's data protection complaints process; a parent may still also pursue a complaint under this policy, and the school will not discourage them from doing so. Where a complaint touches on both data protection and other matters, the school will take early advice to ensure both are handled appropriately. This policy has also been reviewed against the Department for Education's Independent School Standards guidance, updated April 2026.

SECTION 7 – PUBLICISING THE PROCEDURE

The school will include reference to the procedure in the:

- School prospectus
- Information given to new parents when their children join the Institute
- School website (where a full download will be available)

APPENDIX 1

FORMAL COMPLAINTS FORM

Please complete and return to the Head Teacher, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your Full Name

Pupil's Full Name

Your Relationship to the Pupil

Full Address

Post Code

Daytime Telephone Number

Evening Telephone Number

Please give details of your complaint

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? Who did you speak to and what was the response?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details

Signature

Print Name

Date

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Date acknowledgement sent

By whom

Complaint referred to

Date

APPENDIX 2

CHECKLIST FOR PANEL HEARING

The panel needs to take the following points into account:

- The hearing is as informal as possible.
- Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.
- After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their

witnesses.

- The Head teacher may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The Head teacher is then invited to explain the School's actions and be followed by the School's witnesses.
- The complainant may question both the Head teacher and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The Head teacher is then invited to sum up the School's actions and response to the complaint.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
- The chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set time scale.

After the Hearing

The committee will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and:

- 1) Give its findings and recommendations.
- 2) Where appropriate, suggest changes to, or request a review of, the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again.

This information will be included in both the letters to the head teacher and the complainant. The decision of the Committee is final.

A complainant may also make a complaint to OFSTED. Their contact details are:

Piccadilly Gate,

Store Street,

Manchester, M1 2WD.

Tel: 0300 123 4666

All letters related to the complaint should be made available for inspection by the Chair of Governors' and the head teacher.